Group 1, claims 1-17 and 46-49, drawn to a first product, a nucleic acid construct encoding a fusion polypeptide comprising a first fusion partner that is a prodomain polypeptide modified to have an increased affinity for a protease, said first fusion partner operably linked to a second fusion partner which is a polypeptide "of interest", to vectors and host cells comprising the nucleic acid construct, and to a first method of use of the nucleic acid construct, and/or vectors and host cells comprising same, in a recombinant process of making the encoded fusion polypeptide, and to the encoded product.

Group 2, claims 18-27 and 59, drawn to a first method of use of a second product, which may be any of at least nine species of subtilisin, in purifying a polypeptide "of interest" by contacting the fusion polypeptide with the protease to liberate the polypeptide "of interest" and subsequently isolating the polypeptide "of interest".

Group 3, claims 28-38 and 60, drawn to second method of use of the second product, which may be any of at least nine species of subtilisin, in an assay to detect the presence of a "substance of interest" by contacting the second product with a fusion polypeptide comprising a polypeptide of interest to permit the liberation of a polypeptide "of interest" and its subsequent binding of a "substance of interest", and then recovering the complex of the polypeptide and substance "of interest".

Group 4, claims 39-45 and 61, drawn to third product, a drug delivery complex comprising a subtilisin prodomain fused to a drug of interest and further comprising an associated protease, which may be any of at least nine species of subtilisin.

Group 5, claims 46-49, drawn to fourth product, a nucleic acid construct having a coding sequence encoding a fusion polypeptide comprising a first fusion partner that is a polypeptide capable of generating affinity with a protease, said first fusion partner operably linked to a second fusion partner which is a polypeptide "of interest".

Group 6, claims 50-53, drawn to a fifth product, a protease variant capable of specifically hydrolyzing a fusion polypeptide upon the addition of a chemical trigger to liberate a polypeptide of interest and to a method of use thereof in hydrolyzing a fusion polypeptide that need not comprise a prodomain to liberate a polypeptide of interest by contacting the fusion polypeptide with the protease variant capable of specifically hydrolyzing a fusion polypeptide upon the addition of a chemical trigger in the presence of a chemical trigger.

Group 7, claims 54-58, drawn to a fifth product which is a nucleic acid construct having a coding sequence encoding a fusion polypeptide comprising a first fusion partner that is a peptide modified to have an increased affinity for a protease, said first fusion partner operably linked to a second fusion partner which is a polypeptide "of interest" and to a method of use thereof in a recombinant method of making the encoded fusion polypeptide.

Applicant hereby elects Group I, claims 1-17 and 46-49. Such election is **WITHOUT TRAVERSE**.

In the November 23, 2007 Office Action, the examiner also required election of one of the following species:

Species 1: methods practiced with, or products comprising, the S149 subtilisin species.
Species 2: methods practiced with, or products comprising, the S160 subtilisin species.
Species 3: methods practiced with, or products comprising, the S188 or S191 subtilisin species.

Species 4: methods practiced with, or products comprising, the S189, S190, S196, S197, S198, S199, or S201 subtilisin species.
Species 5: methods practiced with, or products comprising, the S193 or S202 subtilisin species.
Species 6: methods practiced with, or products comprising, the S194 subtilisin species.

Applicant hereby elects Species 4, methods practiced with, or products comprising, the S189, S190, S196, S197, S198, S199, or S201 subtilisin species.

CONCLUSION

If any issues require further resolution, the examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at (919) 419-9350 to discuss same.

Respectfully submitted,

/steven j. hultquist/

Steven J. Hultquist
Reg. No. 28,021
Attorney for Applicants

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY/ TECHNOLOGY LAW
Phone: (919) 419-9350
Fax: (919) 419-9354
Attorney File No.: 4115-181

The USPTO is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment of fees properly payable for this document to Deposit Account No. 08-3284